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ABSTRACT

One of the twelve exemplary programs summarized in the Introduction to Right to Read's "Effective Reading Programs: Summaries of 222 Selected Programs" (CS001934), this program serves the students of an inner-city junior high school and has as its main thrust training teachers in a diagnostic-prescriptive approach to teaching reading and helping them use appropriate reading materials in their classrooms. Teacher assistants and some ninth-grade tutors assist teachers in carrying out individual student reading programs, and students whose reading skills are particularly low attend special laboratories or centers where they receive intensive individual attention. Content in English and social studies is individualized to heighten student interest and to ensure that students receive only course materials they are capable of reading. (WR/AIR)

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PROGRAM AREA: Reading

PROJECT TITLE: Right to Read

LOCATION: San Diego, California

SOURCES AND LEVEL OF FUNDING: ESEA Title III: $300,000 (covers three years)

PROGRAM START DATE: 1972

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:

Goals and objectives: The program's aims are to increase students' desire to read, and to improve their comprehension of written materials and increase their reading rates. Specifically, the goal of the program during the first year was for every student in the program to show on a standardized reading test a gain of 1.5 years after 1 year in the program.

Context. The program operates in Wilson Junior High School, which is located in the inner area of a large city (over 200,000). Parents of children attending this school earn between $6,000 and $15,000 a year. In 1972-73, 18% of the students in the program were Mexican American, and 11% were black. This school was selected for program because it serves a transitional neighborhood and school reading scores had been dropping.

Program description.

The program had four major features:

.Retraining of teachers

.Diagnostic-prescriptive approach

.Individualized content in English and Social Studies

.Training of ninth graders as tutors

These features will be described in the appropriate sections.

Grade levels, years of operation, size--In 1972-73, the first year of operation, the program served all the seventh-graders at Wilson Junior High School, 607 students in all. During the 1973-74 school year, all seventh- and eighth-graders are served, a total of 1220 students.

Preservice/inservice training and staffing--The main thrust of the program was staff development, since junior high school teachers frequently are ill-equipped to diagnose or remedy reading problems. English and Social Studies teachers attended a preservice one-week workshop, and during the first year of the program received continuous assistance from resource teachers. Teachers were trained to use diagnostic tests, and were alerted to the variety of techniques and materials available for teaching reading as a skill. They were taught to create

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individualized programs in English, Social Studies, and reading, and were stimulated to apply new techniques in the classroom. Constant reinforcement of student progress was stressed, as was the use of teacher-developed materials. Resource teachers were available to help the teachers implement new techniques in their classrooms.

To make individualized instruction possible, the program used teacher assistants in the classrooms, and also trained some ninth-grade students to serve as reading tutors for the project students. Teacher assistants attended the preservice workshops and also received ongoing training from teachers. Student tutors were trained over a three-week period before they began tutoring.

In 1972-73, the program used the following staff: principal-program director (1, part time), vice principal (1, part time), counselor (1, part time), coordinator (1, full time), tutor trainer (1, part time), resource teachers (3, full time), classroom teachers (15, full time), teacher assistants (10, full time), students tutors (53, part time), and an evaluator (1, part time).

Curricula, time involved--When the program was implemented, all seventh-graders were tested and their reading problems were diagnosed. Each student was then scheduled for an individually prescribed reading program, which could include one-to-one tutoring, small group work, or contract instruction. In the content areas of English and Social Studies, diagnosis was ongoing and each student's skills and needs were evaluated frequently. If a student's reading needs indicated, he was selected at attend the Tutoring Center or the Reading Center. At the Tutoring Center, teachers would monitor his acceptance of responsibility and meet with him to review and evaluate his progress. The Reading Center was designed for concentrated work with students reading two or more years below grade level. In the classrooms, a variety of books and magazines were made available to encourage interest in and enthusiasm for reading.

The program devoted 8 to 10 hours a week to language arts.

Materials--The program used locally developed training materials to train teachers, teacher assistants, and tutors. In creating student programs, teachers could draw on a wide variety of diagnostic tests, and books, workbooks, and audiovisual materials. Cassette-tape players, player-recorders, filmstrip and slide projectors, and record players were available in almost every classroom. The program also had a videotape recorder, which could be used to create new materials for students or teachers. In the Reading Center, three controlled readers were available.

Facilities--Two rooms (classroom-size) are required for the Reading Center and the Tutoring Center. In the classroom, movable furniture appropriate to individualized instruction was used, such as small tables, study carrels, and desks and chairs of varying types.

Parental involvement--At the end of the first year, parents were given a questionnaire asking about their perceptions of their child's progress and their attitude toward the program. They were also informed

of their child's pre and posttest scores for the year, and were asked to make sure that reading materials would be available to their child over the summer. In addition, several parents have been trained to act as tutors or tutor coordinators in the second year of the program.

Cost--Total cost of the program will be $300,000 for the three years' planned operation. The cost of instructional materials for a class of 30 is $220. The average annual per/pupil program cost in 1972-73 was approximately $970, which exceeded that of the regular program by $50 per pupil.

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS: (See attached section.)

EVIDENCE OF EFFECTIVENESS:

Evaluation conducted by. Mrs. Marge Craig, Evaluations Division, San Diego City Schools

Sample size and method. All seventh-graders at Wilson Junior High School were included in the program; 607 students in all. Wilson was selected for the program because its reading scores were dropping (it is in a transitional neighborhood), although the scores were not the lowest in the district. Both pretest and posttest scores are available on 502 students, a loss of about 17% of the sample.

Comparison method. Gains from pretest to posttest are compared with national norms, since no school was matched with the treatment school. Since reading scores at Wilson were dropping and the school population is changing, comparison with previous school scores would not accurately represent the effectiveness of the program.

Measures. Forms A and B of the Nelson Silent Reading Test were used. This battery has a vocabulary and a reading comprehension subtest, and can be used from Grades 3 through 9.

The MMY reports that the correlation between this test and other standardized reading tests is about .8. The reliability between forms is said to be .9.

Data collection. The pretest, which is used as a bench-mark, was administered in October of the year the program began. The posttest was administered in April, after a treatment period of 6 months.

Data analysis. Descriptive statistics used were means and medians, standard deviations, and quartiles. Pretest and posttest mean and median grade equivalent scores are shown below.

N = 502		Pretest	Posttest	Mean Growth
Vocabulary:	Mean	6.7	7.8	11 months
	Median	6.7	7.8	
Comprehension:	Mean	6.1	7.9	18 months
	Median	6.0	7.9	
Total reading:	Mean	6.4	7.8	14 months
	Median	6.3	7.8	

Inferential statistics (applied by AIR evaluator) were t-tests for correlated means.

Changes in outcome and their reliability. The significance of the actual gains over expected gains on both subtests and for the total score is beyond the .001 level. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that these gains range from one-fourth to one-half a standard deviation.

Educational significance. On the average, students gained 2.5 months in total reading for each month of instruction in the program. Although mean pretest scores were at least several months below grade level, mean posttest scores are at or slightly above grade level.